

Health Alert

October 23, 2001

**FROM: MAUREEN E. DEMPSEY, M.D.
DIRECTOR**

**SUBJECT: CDC Recommendations on Antibiotic Prophylaxis for
Workers and Visitors to Washington DC Processing
and Distribution Center**

The Department of Health and Senior Services is forwarding the following information from CDC. Please contact the Department if you have any questions at 1-800-392-0272.

Distributed Via Health Alert Network

October 23, 2001 02:27 EDT (2:27 AM EDT)

> CDC Recommendations on Antibiotic Prophylaxis for Workers and Visitors to
> the Washington, D.C. Processing and Distribution Center, 900 Brentwood
> Road and the Mail Handling Center, Cargo Road, Anne Arundel County,
> Maryland

> All employees of and visitors to the Washington, D.C. Processing and
> Distribution Center, 900 Brentwood Road and the Mail Handling Center,
> Cargo Road, Anne Arundel County, near the Baltimore-Washington
> International Airport since October 10th should begin antibiotic
> prophylaxis for possible exposure to B. anthracis (anthrax). It is
> believed that these individuals could have been exposed to the bacterium.
> * These individuals should receive antibiotic prophylaxis for 10 days,
> with continuation determined by the Washington, D.C. Health Department and
> the Maryland and Virginia State Health Departments.

> * These individuals should not be tested for exposure to B. anthracis
> with nasal swabs. Nasal swabs are used primarily for epidemiologic
> investigation and not for individual diagnosis, prophylaxis, or treatment.
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> * Nasal swabs are also not recommended for testing people at potential
> risk who are currently away from the Washington, D.C. area. Again, such
> tests are not used to determine the need for prophylaxis among people who
> are potentially exposed.

> The Deputy Postmaster General is currently contacting employees about
> beginning prophylaxis. People who meet the criteria for potential risk and
> are currently away from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area should
> contact their local or state health department to receive prophylaxis.
> CDC requests that state health departments do the following:

> · Facilitate access to antibiotic prophylaxis if they are contacted.

> · Initiate a system for recording the names of and tracking those
> individuals for follow-up purposes in the event they develop signs or
> symptoms consistent with anthrax.

> · Contact CDC at (770) 488-7100 and request the State Liaison Desk to
> report names and contact information of people determined to be at
> potential risk who are currently away from the Washington, D.C.
> metropolitan area.

> CDC's investigation is ongoing. Future modifications to these
> recommendations may occur on the basis of epidemiologic and laboratory
> information. Additional modifications and any new information will be
> posted.

How to contact us:

Office of the Director

912 Wildwood

P.O. Box 570

Jefferson City, MO 65102

Telephone: (800) 392-0272

Fax: (573) 751-6041

Website: www.dhss.state.mo.us

CDC

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DISEASE CONTROL
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